

Remarks/Arguments:

This is a reply to the office action of October 19.

The claims have been amended as follows:

- 1) Amended claim 28 incorporates the subject matter of filed claims 28, 34, 35 and 36 considered in item 7 of the office action to be allowable.
- 2) Claims 29, 30, 32 and 33 should now be allowable being dependent upon allowable amended claim 28.
- 3) Claims 31 and 34 to 38 are cancelled.
- 4) Claims 39 and 40 have been amended to be dependent upon allowable claim 28.
- 5) Claim 41 is dependent upon claim 40 (which is dependent upon allowable claim 28).
- 6) Claims 42 to 44 are cancelled.
- 7) Claim 45 should be allowable being dependent upon allowable claim 52 (referred to below).
- 8) Amended claim 46 combines the subject matter of filed claims 46 and 47 considered in item 8 of the office action to be allowable.
- 9) Claims 47 and 48 are cancelled.
- 10) New claim 49 incorporates the subject matter of filed claims 28, 34, 42 and 43 considered in item 9 of the office action to be allowable. Note that this claim defines that the "link arms permitting the height of said suction head to adjust relative to said collector" rather than the

terminology used in claim 42 "said link means permitting the height of said collector to be adjusted relative to said suction head". It is believed that there is sufficient support in the description for this amended terminology.

11) Claims 50 and 51 are new being based on filed claims 44 and 45 and being dependent upon allowable claim 49.

12) New claim 52 incorporates the subject matter of filed claims 28, 34, 42 and 44 considered in item 10 of the office action to be allowable. A similar amendment referred to in relation to the above claim 49 has also been made to this claim.

13) Claim 53 is a new independent claim which it is submitted distinguishes the invention from the cited prior art. In particular claim 53 defines apparatus which has the following features:

(a) a suction head assembly including a suction head and skids which support the suction head for movement over a floor surface of the reservoir

(b) the suction head comprising an elongated hollow body having an upper side and a lower side which defines a mouth with at least one outlet duct extending from the hollow suction head

(c) a floating collector comprising a housing defining a collection chamber and buoyant means for buoyantly supporting the housing adjacent the surface of liquid in the reservoir, the housing including at least one entry port communicating with the at least one outlet duct

(d) means for introducing air into the suction head to create a suction pressure in the suction head to cause in use liquid and solids adjacent the mouth of the suction head to pass along the at least one outlet duct into the at least one entry port for collection in the collection chamber of the collector,

(e) pivotal link means interconnecting said collector and suction head assembly

(f) means for moving the apparatus in the liquid reservoir,

(g) the pivotal link means permitting the height of said suction head assembly to vary relative to the collector when following the floor surface of the reservoir upon movement of the apparatus in the reservoir

Regarding the documents cited by the examiner, while Nixon discloses a dome-shaped suction head with an upper outlet and an air conduit for displacing solids, the suction head is not provided with skids for movement over a floor surface of the reservoir nor is the suction head associated with a floating collector or connected to the collector by pivotal link means.

Pentz discloses an air lift suction system for removing solids however the system does not include a floating collector or a suction head provided with skids for movement over a floor surface. Similar comments apply to Wade and Forrest. While Forrest employs scrapers (74,75), the scrapers do not support the suction head but rather are held in position "parallel to and spaced from walls" of the effluent tank.

Phillips discloses an air lift suction system including a suction head mounted to a ship. Materials are discharged onto a conveyor and not into a collection chamber. Pivotal link means are not provided to interconnect the suction head and collector which allow the height of the suction head assembly to be varied as the suction head assembly follows the floor surface of the reservoir.

Kausser discloses a dredging apparatus incorporating air lift system associated with a ship. The height of the suction head is varied by means of a hoist. Pivotal link means are not provided to interconnect the suction head and collector which allow the height of the suction head assembly to be varied as the suction head assembly follows the floor surface of the reservoir.

It is submitted that the combination of features (a) to (g) in claim 53 referred to above is neither suggested nor disclosed in any of the cited documents or combinations thereof.

14) New claims 54 to 58 are dependent upon claim 53.

We believe that the claims now presented are patentable over the prior art of record, and that this application is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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